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R E M A R K S

Claim 1 has been amended in a manner believed to obviate the anticipation rejection thereof as a result of Chow et al., U.S. Patent 5,989,402, as well as the possible provisional double patenting rejection based on the pending claims of application serial number 09/595,420, having a common inventor with the sole inventor of the present application. The ownership of the '420 application differs from the ownership of the present application, which is owned solely by Agilent Technologies, Inc.; the '420 application is owned jointly by Agilent Technologies, Inc., and Caliper, Inc. Applicant has added claims 18-25, to provide him with the protection to which he is deemed entitled.

Claim 1, upon which claims 2-14 now depend, distinguishes over Chow et al. and the claims of the co-pending application by requiring an interface element that is carried by a holder, both of which have structures for enabling the interface unit to be releasably connectable to the holder so the interface element can be selectively secured to and removed from the holder, wherein the interface element has exterior surfaces resistant to the substances processed by the microchip. The foregoing features are not disclosed by Chow et al. and are not obvious from the claims of the co-pending application which are limited to a cartridge. There is

no suggestion from the cartridge feature of the claims of the co-pending application that an interface element having the previously mentioned features be included in the cartridge.

The rejection of claims 3-5 as being obvious as a result of the Chow et al. patent and further in view of Shoji (1994) is now improper because Shoji fails to cure the above noted deficiency of claim 1, with regard to Chow et al.

Newly added claim 18 further distinguishes over the art of record and the claims of the co-pending application by requiring the cooperating structures of the holder and interface to be such that the interface element is locked in place on a securing structure of the holder in response to rotation of the interface element relative to the holder.

Claim 19 distinguishes over the art of record and the claims of the co-pending application by requiring a housing for the microchip, holder, interface element and supply unit. The holder and housing are required to have cooperating structures for enabling the holder to be selectively locked in place in the housing and released and removed from the housing.

Claim 20 is similar to claim 1 as amended, but requires the interface element to consist of materials and structures that can be cleaned with chemicals for reuse instead of having exterior surfaces resistant to the substances processed by the microchip.

This feature is missing from the Chow et al. reference and is not rendered obvious by the claims of the co-pending application.

Claim 21 is similar to claim 19, but depends on claim 20, instead of claim 1. Claim 22 is similar to claim 1, as amended, but does not include the feature of the interface element having exterior surfaces resistant to the substance processed by the microchip. Instead, claim 22 requires a housing for each of the microchip, holder, interface element and supply unit, wherein the holder and housing have cooperating structures for enabling the holder to be selectively locked into place in the housing and released and removed from the housing. Chow et al. fails to disclose the foregoing feature, which is unobvious over the claims of the co-pending application.

Claims 23-25 are directed to a system for enabling plural microchips with different microfluidic configurations to be interchangeably used. The different microfluidic configurations have different supply element configurations. The system comprises a supply unit for providing a potential for moving substances in a microchip being used in a device of the system. The supply unit has supply lines for enabling the potential to be coupled to the microchip being used in the device. Plural interface elements having supply lines are required for selective connection between supply lines of the source and the supply elements of the microchips. Different ones of the interface elements have

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different supply line configurations for supplying potentials from the supply lines of the source to the supply elements of the microchips with different microfluidic configurations. In addition, claim 23 requires the interface elements to have exterior surfaces that are resistant to the substances processed by the microchip. Claim 24 does not require the latter exterior surface limitation, but indicates the interface elements consist of materials and structures that can be cleaned with the chemicals for reuse. Claim 25 does not require the exterior surfaces to be resistant to the substances processed by the microchip or to consist of materials and structures that can be cleaned with chemicals for reuse, but requires a housing for each of the microchip, holder, interface element and supply unit. The holder and housing have cooperating structures for enabling the holder to be selectively locked into place in the housing and released and removed from the housing. The features of claims 23-25 are not disclosed by Chow et al. nor are they rendered obvious from the claims of the co-pending application.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, favorable reconsideration and allowance are respectively requested and deemed in order.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage

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in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 07-1337 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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MARKED UP VERSION SHOWING CHANGES

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claim 1 as follows:

1. (Amended) A device for operating a [laboratory] microchip with a microfluid structure for chemical, physical, and/or biological processing, the microchip including supply elements corresponding with the microfluid structure, [especially for analyzing or synthesizing substances] comprising

a supply unit for providing a potential for moving substances corresponding to the microfluid structure, the supply unit having supply lines for [transmitting] enabling the potential to be coupled to the microchip, the supply lines being arranged to interact with the supply elements which correspond to the microfluid structure,

an interface element, and [releasably connected between the supply unit and the microchip]

a holder for carrying the interface element,

the interface element including a structure for connecting the supply lines with at least one of the supply elements that correspond to the microfluid structure,

the interface element and the holder having structures for enabling the interface element to be releasably connectable to the

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holder so that the interface element can be selectively secured to  
and removed from the holder,

the interface element having exterior surfaces resistant to  
the substances processed by the microchip.